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Bright Eyes of 1934

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Twentieth Annual Report

of the

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

50 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y.

1934

Bright Eyes of 1934

THE healthy, shining eyes of the Dionne babies will always remain in our memory as the bright eyes of 1934. They represent the quintessence of what science contributes to life. For the first time in history—and only with the added grace of science—have quintuplets survived beyond the first few weeks of life. If science and civilized care have thus saved these five babies, how much more have science and the application of its principles given to the world!

In no field is this more true than in sight conservation. From the emerald of Nero to the highly refined contact lens of today; from the crude guesswork of the past to the exactitude of the modern ophthalmoscope; from the torch of primeval days to the incandescent lamp; from the oxcart to the powerful amphibion—have gone incalculable efforts toward man's advancement.

The goal we seek today is bright eyes for the future. With the growing emphasis on prevention, we have the opportunity to utilize scientific knowledge for the greatest social good. We have the combined efforts of the doctor, the public health worker, the educator, the illuminating and safety engineers, the state and voluntary health organizations, the parent-teacher association, civic organizations, all of whom are increasingly working hand in hand with the organized agencies to save sight.

Community Enterprise in Preventing Blindness

With the increased responsibility of the community for its members has grown an interest in the various community problems. The National Society for the Prevention of Blindness has sensed this through the larger number of inquiries and the greater number of requests for educational material.

Publications.—Figures gathered for the year indicate that approximately a quarter of a million publications were distributed

at the request of 1,419 local communities in the United States and of 43 foreign communities.

Films.—The same advance has been noted in the use of the film, "Preventing Blindness and Saving Sight." Of 18 copies, 11 were requested for long-period loans for state circulation; two were purchased outright, after previews, by educational groups; and the others were in constant circulation directly from the Society's offices. From the reports received, it has been estimated that there were 420 showings under the auspices of 31 organizations, reaching an audience of 29,532—medical groups, parents and teachers, and students.

Exhibits.—Some indication of the wide audience reached by means of the Society's display material may be derived from the fact that 39 exhibit units were used at 20 well-attended regional and national health and education meetings. All told, 58 organizations displayed this material during the year.

Field Services.—Members of the staff were called upon to participate in local sight conservation activities in 86 cities in 21 states, as well as the District of Columbia, Canada and Europe. Services of a representative of the Society were requested by six states, especially to present demonstrations of the technique of vision testing. Whatever the special mission of the worker in the field, each is qualified to present not only his specialty, but the general program of conservation of vision.

Community Plan for Sight Conservation.—Community demands on the Society's facilities demonstrated the need for a community plan for conservation of vision; the Society, therefore, prepared an outline for the use of civic groups interested in furthering such a program. This outline, published originally in the *Sight-Saving Review*, has been reprinted, and will be circularized throughout the United States with a view to arousing interest locally in prevention of blindness projects.

Co-operation with CWA and FERA.—A special type of community activity which developed as a result of the program of the present Federal Administration has been co-operation with the CWA and the FERA. Through the Society's assistance to 47 state CWA directors, hundreds of thousands of CWA workers have received information on eye protection. Co-operation also was given

in the preparation of an official CWA bulletin requiring thoroughgoing eye protection on all CWA jobs in New York State. The Society also prepared an outline used as a basis for developing projects in sight conservation for nurses employed under local or state relief administrations, which was sent to all nurses employed under these administrations.

Contribution of Statistics to Prevention of Blindness

A study of the causes of blindness in 2,702 children in 20 schools and classes for the blind was undertaken by the Committee on Statistics of the Blind, on which the Society is actively represented. It is hoped, with the publication of these studies, to determine more clearly along what lines prevention must proceed. Since the very root of the problem lies in a cause-classification, the international aspect of such a classification should not be underestimated. With this in mind, the cause-classification developed by the Committee was presented for discussion at the annual meeting of the International Association for Prevention of Blindness, in which eminent ophthalmologists from all over the world participated.

Eliminating Accidents from Fireworks

For the first time, executives of practically all the national safety, health and recreation agencies actively concerned with accidents from fireworks conferred on methods of procedure to eliminate such casualties. The Society has long felt that these accidents are far more numerous than is generally supposed, and has come to the conclusion that control through local legislation alone is hopeless of attainment. The real answer lies in control of the manufacture of fireworks and in education of the public. In a stirring address, at the Society's annual conference session on this subject, the Honorable Alfred E. Smith declared, over a national radio hookup:

"I am for a Fourth of July in which not a single American child will be killed, in which not one boy will lose an eye, in which no child will be burned. My advice on how to get that kind of a Fourth of July is this:

"First, get the co-operation of the fireworks manufacturers themselves.

"Second, keep up your educational work.

Upon request, this poster is available in two colors, size 24" x 18", for exhibit purposes

"Third, go after state-wide legislation, but plan it carefully and work together like a single team and not a dozen separate organizations."

Campaign Against Prenatal Syphilis

The joint campaign of the American Medical Association and the National Health Council against syphilis as a cause of blindness has made considerable progress. "A blood test for every expectant mother" has been the slogan. In an attempt to popularize this idea, a brief, illustrated leaflet with the title, "Safe and Sound," was published and very widely circulated by the Society. The response has been enthusiastic; in fact, a recent letter from a local organization indicated that it was in greater demand than any other publication sent for distribution.

As a subject of one of the sessions of the annual conference of the Society, the necessity for prenatal antisyphilitic treatment attracted a large and interested audience of doctors, nurses, and public health workers, all of whom left with the determination to further public education on this subject. The Society also participated in this campaign through assistance in planning a study of eye involvement in syphilis cases, in clinics in New York City, undertaken by the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association. The most hopeful aspect of this tragic problem is that people in general seem to be more receptive to discussion of it.

Conserving the Sight of School Children

Publication of Report.—At the close of 1934, the final proofs of the revised edition of "Conserving the Sight of School Children" were checked. This is the first completely revised and reorganized edition since 1929, and incorporates the most expert thought on the subject. As in the past, it is the product of the Joint Committee on Health Problems in Education of the National Education Association and the American Medical Association, in co-operation with the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. Hundreds of copies have been ordered in advance, and a wide distribution is anticipated.

Sight-Saving Classes.—The first sight-saving class in Honolulu was established this year, with an enrollment of Japanese, Chinese,

Filipino and Portuguese children. This was but one of 29 new classes established in the United States and its possessions.

In meeting the need for teachers of sight-saving classes, training courses were given at the summer sessions of the University of Chicago; the University of Cincinnati; Teachers College, Columbia University; and State Teachers College, Buffalo, New York. Among the seventy-five students taking these courses were principals of schools, teachers of regular grades, and nurses, as well as those preparing to become sight-saving class teachers.

The worth and utility of the *Sight-Saving Class Exchange* were conclusively decided by the unanimous vote, at the Society's annual conference, for continuance of its publication.

The special edition of the *Girl Scout Handbook*, in large type, prepared in co-operation with the Girl Scouts, Inc., was ready for distribution early in the year. Thus, one more step has been taken in bringing together in their activities sight-saving class children and children having normal vision.

Eye Health Education in Teacher Training Centers.—The Society's offer of professional assistance to teacher training institutions, in integrating an eye health program into the existing curricula, has been gratifyingly received. More requests have come in for this service than it has been possible to meet. However, six colleges or teacher training institutions have been accorded the services of the Society's health education expert in fitting the subject of eye health into the required courses in education. Four have already incorporated eye health units. The import of this project might be realized if it were possible to estimate the number of pupils who will be taught by the teachers now getting their training in these institutions.

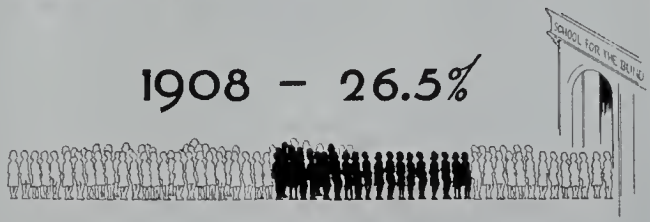
"Program of Eye Health in a School System."—The demand for this publication, which had been available previously in mimeographed form, was so great that several printed editions have been exhausted during the year. One state used it as a basis for making a survey of the eyesight of its school children.

Medical Social Service

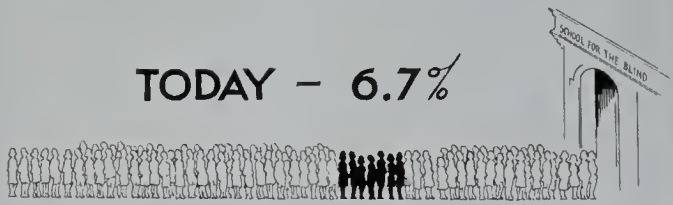
At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, the Society was represented by a

BABIES' SORE EYES CAN BE ERADICATED

1908 – 26.5%



TODAY – 6.7%



The number of new pupils entering schools for the blind because of babies' sore eyes (ophthalmia neonatorum) has been reduced 75% in the past 26 years.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS
50 WEST 50 ST
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Upon request, this poster is available in two colors, size 24″ x 18″, for exhibit purposes

staff member who collaborated with Dr. Lawrence T. Post, associate professor of clinical ophthalmology at Washington University School of Medicine, in presenting the subject of medical social service in eye work. This address will be published in the February, 1935, issue of the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, and it is planned to circulate reprints among the ophthalmologists, as well as among medical social workers.

The program of the Society in extending this work included the training of three workers, one each for Provident Hospital (colored), Chicago; Falk Clinic, University of Pittsburgh; and Charity Hospital, New Orleans. In February, with the employment of a specially trained medical social eye worker, a demonstration was begun at the Colorado General Hospital, Denver. Further emphasis was given to this aspect of prevention of blindness work at the joint meeting with the American Association of Hospital Social Workers, during the National Conference of Social Work.

Summary of Other Projects

Industrial Eye Accidents.—The program against eye accidents in industry has been continued. The Society took active part in the Fifth Annual Greater New York Safety Conference, presenting an extensive exhibit and offering consultant services.

The Society collaborated in the formulation of a national code on safety glass, and co-operated with various local bodies interested in legislation requiring the use of safety glass in motor vehicles. During the year, laws were passed in the following states: Iowa, New Jersey and Virginia. Thus far, eight states have such laws.

Public Education.—An intensive radio campaign was conducted through the co-operation of the Medical Information Bureau of the New York Academy of Medicine. A member of the Society's Advisory Board, two members of the Board of Directors, and eight staff members gave talks on various phases of eyesight conservation. Four were nation-wide hookups—three over the Columbia Broadcasting System and one over the National Broadcasting Company network. As a result, many inquiries were received regarding the Society's work.

During the year, 1,169 news articles and editorials on prevention

of blindness projects, based on press releases issued by the Society, appeared in newspapers and periodicals in nearly every section of the country.

In an effort to increase the interest of ophthalmologists in the social aspects of sight saving, a full-page announcement, on which a special rate was allowed, was carried monthly in the *American Journal of Ophthalmology*. Through this effort, 59 oculists have become actively interested in the Society's work and in its publications.

Annual Conference.—In promoting the co-operative nature of its work, the Society extended a hearty welcome to various national and local groups during the annual conference, which was held at headquarters in Rockefeller Center, December 6–8, inclusive. Dr. Edward Jackson, dean of ophthalmology in the United States, presented the subject, "The Broad Basis for Prevention of Blindness"; other topics were: Contribution of Statistics to the Prevention of Blindness; Eliminating Fireworks Accidents; Prenatal Infections in Relation to Blindness; Problems Relating to Sight-Saving Classes. Proceedings will be published in the March *Sight-Saving Review* and February *Sight-Saving Class Exchange*.

In Memoriam

During the year, the Society has suffered the loss of three members of the Board of Directors who, for many years, served tirelessly and faithfully: George Blagden, Edward F. Glaser, and William Campbell Posey. Their work is an eternal monument.

The Society also has regretfully recorded the death of many loyal and generous supporters. The memory of their vital interest in the prevention of needless blindness is an abiding inspiration, as well as a stimulus, to carry on in the spirit which characterized their giving.

Summary of Finances

I. Statement of General Fund Income and Expenses for the Yeor Ended December 31, 1934

INCOME		
Donations		
New	$10,425.70	
Renewal	59,699.35	$70,125.05
Memberships		
New	460.00	
Renewal	13,348.80	13,808.80
Subscriptions to magazine—"Sight-Saving Review"		535.50
Sale of publications		1,287.93
Return on service and travel		552.43
Interest and dividends from Reserve and Endowment Fund assets		9,839.71
Share of income from undistributed principal assets of the Wendel Estate		750.00
Total Income		$96,899.42
EXPENSES		
Administration	$35,309.00	
Education and public information	36,903.92	
Field service	12,993.55	
Editorial research	8,716.69	
Publications	9,547.88	
Extension	13,717.42	
Collection of legacies	834.60	
Co-operative projects	13,925.76	
Total Expenses		131,948.82
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER INCOME		$35,049.40

II. Statement of Financial Condition, December 31, 1934

GENERAL FUND		
Assets		
Cash	$39,220.59	
Accrued interest receivable	1,487.45	
Prepaid expenses	1,251.46	
Total Assets		41,959.50
Liabilities		
Accounts payable		7,658.92
Balance, December 31, 1934		$34,300.58

SPECIAL FUNDS

Assets		
Cash Uninvested:		
Endowment Fund	$ 0.00	
Reserve Fund	26,755.88	$26,755.88
Securities—(Endowment and Reserve Funds) at book value	160,622.87	
Mortgages at book value	85,000.00	245,622.87
Accounts and notes receivable		17,172.01
Liabilities		0.00
Balance, December 31, 1934		$289,550.76
Total Net Asset Value General Fund and Special Funds .		$323,851.34

In the Statement of General Fund Income and Expenses it will be noted that the expenses were $131,948.82, while the income applicable thereto was $96,899.42. Therefore, the excess of operating expense over operating income was in the amount of $35,049.40, which sum was drawn from the accumulated surplus in the General Fund. Additions to the Reserve and Endowment Funds in 1934 aggregated $32,574.43. Hence, the total net worth of the Society was reduced during the year by only $2,474.97.

On the basis of book value, the auditor's report for 1934 shows that the total net assets of the Society as of December 31 were in the amount of $323,851.34. These funds were accumulated largely from receipts in the form of legacies and special gifts.

Contributions and membership fees during 1934 totaled $83,933.85, or $900 more than receipts from the same source in 1933. Further comparison reveals the encouraging information that this is the first year since 1929 in which the receipts from members and donors have not fallen below the amount for the previous year. For the generosity and concern which these gifts represent, the Board of Directors and the members of the Society's staff are most appreciative.

The managing director is required by the Board to submit a detailed statement of proposed expenditures, and to account for all sums spent under the budget limitations. Vouchers are on file for every expenditure. The books are audited semiannually. For the year ending December 31, 1934, an audit was made by Frederick Fischer, Jr.; a copy of this will be sent upon request to anyone wishing to make a further examination of the Society's financial operations.

Form of Bequest

I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation created under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of..... ..... Dollars for its corporate purposes.

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.

50 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y.

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Theodore O. Yoder, *Staff Associate*

* Deceased March 17, 1935.